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S E C R E T KUWAIT 005438

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/18/2012

TAGS: PREL KU

SUBJECT: RADICAL ISLAMIST ACQUITTED OF DAMAGING KUWAITI DEFENSE

Classified By: CDA Frank C. Urbancic for reason 1.5 (d)

¶1. (U) Influential Kuwaiti Muslim fundamentalist Jaber al-Jalahma was acquitted on December 17 of charges of &damaging military preparations for the defense of the country<sup>8</sup> by publicly praising the attackers who shot and killed a U.S. Marine on October 8 as heroes and martyrs.

¶2. (U) In the short, two-day trial, the court found that the defendant's expression of his personal views had not harmed the interests of the State of Kuwait and that there was a lack of material facts surrounding the accusations. &What the suspect had said about the Failaka shooting incident is personal opinion in which he expressed his point of view on the two assailants,<sup>8</sup> it added.

¶3. (U) After the trial, al-Jalahma's lawyers said they will file suit against the Ministry of Interior and the State Security Department for the psychological, social and material stress they claim their client was subjected to.

¶4. (S) Comment: Jalahma's acquittal is a disappointment. He is one of Kuwait's most notable and virulent anti-Americans, and this decision will certainly be interpreted as a complete "victory" for him and his political Islamist allies. MoI Assistant Undersecretary Ahmad al-Rujaib, one of the key people in the operations division, told charge December 18 that the decision was a gift to the Islamists. Rujaib understood clearly that Jalahma's real goal is to transform Kuwaiti society, and that his attacks against the United States are only the first step in clearing the way for that negative transformation. This, particularly if it is coupled with a similar ruling on accused Islamist Mohammed al-Mulaifi later this month, has already sent a demoralizing shiver through the law enforcement community.

End Comment.

URBANCIC